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the scientific appointees by the President of the University. Its favorable conclusions are generally made public, while the unfavorable ones are usually not mentioned in public. In some cases the latter are the more significant and official quietude has not always destroyed the wholesome influence which such conclusions should exert.

Whatever our view may be in regard to extensions of the usefulness of the Society, I presume all would agree that these extensions should be questions of minor importance. The scientific academy ideals should dominate, and the core of a successful chapter of the Sigma Xi is research activity of high order in its own midst and the profound scientific respect which is cultivated by such activity. Unless important scientific results are announced and explained occasionally at its meetings real Sigma Xi life is impossible.

THE VALUE OF AN ALUMNI CHAPTER

MARCUS BENJAMIN

"Of what value can the Sigma Xi be to a graduate who is not within easy reach of his home chapter?" is a question that has often been put to me. Frankly I can think of but one answer, and that is: "By being helpful."

It seems to me that the Sigma Xi came into existence largely because of the desirability of having an organization that would be helpful to the younger students in science. Surely its motto brings out that fact most distinctively, for what is the use of being "Companions in zealous research" unless we are helpful to one another?

Most of us in this world are sadly in need of help all the time. Help that will enable us to meet the many demands that are made on us in consequence of the tremendous pressure that is continuously being exerted to compel us to hold our own in the specialty that we are developing or in the place that we have been called to fill.

I am finding that more and more men who should devote their vacations to rest and recuperation are giving them up to hard work. Every year the summer colony of those who come to Washington increases, and it consists largely of teachers who spend their vacation-days either among the books in the Library of Congress or in the laboratories of the National Museum. Even a trip to Europe in hot weather with visits to laboratories and museums is far from being a recreation. That sort of thing, however, has become necessary in order that students, and especially those engaged in the

study of science, should do in order to maintain their standing in their professions.

I am not prepared to say that all this is wrong, but when the question, "What service an alumni chapter of the Sigma Xi can render to a graduate?" is put to me, my answer is that it can help him.

It is not easy to be specific, for individual cases require individual treatment. There is always the social side. Many young men who come to a large city cannot readily afford the means to join a club. This is specially the case if they are married or expect to enter that happy state. Alumni chapters can therefore do much to develop sociability among their members. Many of the strongest and most helpful friendships that I have ever known have been those that existed between members of the same fraternity.

An alumni chapter may do a vast amount of good by steering its younger members into proper channels. One of the worst features of young graduates is a sort of "cocksureness" that is too often prevalent. A lot of good advice may be given to a younger man by one whose experience ought to count for something, and long experience has taught me that many of them need it. For fear that I may be accused of overstating the proposition, let me say that during the last twenty years I have handled a great many manuscripts that have been submitted for publication and I am sorry to say that very many of them showed a degree of indifference in their preparation that was to say the least most lamentable. In other words, the subject matter was satisfactory but the preparation of the results frequently most careless, and yet the authors were for the most part college men. Advice or help in this direction to some men would be greatly appreciated by the present writer.

Then help may be extended to worthy men by aiding them to secure preferment. It has been a pleasure to me to propose a good many younger men for membership in the American Association for the Advancement of Science, and thus I have helped to bring them into association with men who were eminent in their own specialties. It is often possible to aid men to become prominent in their professional societies. A man may be induced to prepare a paper by the friendly encouragement of some one older than himself who believes that the younger man has it in him to do something worth while.

Great teachers like Agassiz, Baird, Chandler, and Newberry will live for all time as a result of the helpful influence they have exerted upon their students. Alumni chapters of the Sigma Xi may accomplish much if their members will strive to imitate the methods of such men.